

HONORING JASON HARRIS AS A DISTINGUISHED LEADER IN CENTRAL FLORIDA FOR PRIDE MONTH

HON. DARREN SOTO

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Mr. SOTO. Madam Speaker, Jason Harris is a Florida native who completed his master's degree in community psychology at Florida A&M University. Jason has a wealth of clinical experience across a variety of settings, including inpatient specialty clinics such as juvenile detention centers and Federal/state prison(s), crisis intervention, structured outpatient programs, inpatient psychiatric, and large non-profits.

Jason has a broad range of clinical experience working with individuals and groups across the life span in the areas of anxiety, substance abuse, behavioral and discipline challenges, self-harm behavior, anger, stress management, trauma, abuse, family, relationship issues, suicide assessment, risk reduction, group psychotherapy, and self-image and self-esteem issues.

Jason's approach emphasizes the mutual development of goals for therapy and the provision of ongoing evaluation of the therapeutic approach. Jason is invested in emphasizing a more integrative, dynamic, cultural, and holistic approach to mental health.

Jason is currently the lead therapist working with juveniles from ages 13 to 21. The program is a 9 to 12 residential commitment program—Kissimmee Youth Academy, Youth Opportunity Investments, LLC—where the youth are given weekly individual sessions, daily group therapy sessions, and monthly family sessions. In addition, Jason is one of the therapists/allies/members with The Center Orlando providing emotional support and counseling to LGBTQIA+ community members. Through his efforts and commitment, Jason is dedicated to providing hope for a better and brighter tomorrow through healing, emotional regulation, and progressive counsel.

RECOGNIZING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PELL GRANT

HON. DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the 50th Anniversary of the Pell Grant Program.

In 1972, Congress amended the Higher Education Act by creating the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant to provide direct financial aid to low-income students so they would have the same access to higher education and opportunity for success as their higher income peers. But this process was not without its trials and tribulations. It is not lost on me the incredible tenacity of the late Lois Dickson Rice—the “mother of the Pell Grant”—whose work with the College Entrance Examination Board was instrumental in the creation of the Basic Education Opportunity Grant later named the Pell Grant for its original sponsor, the late Senator Claiborne Pell, Democrat from Rhode Island.

I want to take a moment to speak about a constituent of mine who is spending her summer working in my office, Fatimah Toure. She is a rising senior at Seton Hall University studying political science and Africana Studies. She is one of over 27,000 Pell Grant recipients in New Jersey's 10th congressional district and a scholar of the campus-based Equal Opportunity Program (EOP). As a first generation American and low-income student, the Pell Grant has allowed Fatimah to achieve and complete her higher education without financial worries. She told me that “College was always part of my plan, but I didn't know how to pay for it. I didn't want to burden my parents and be the reason they couldn't retire, but I also didn't want to take out thousands of dollars in loans. The Pell Grant assisted me and my family in ensuring we can achieve our American dream.” By virtue of qualifying for the Pell Grant, Fatimah and 49 other low-income students were admitted into Seton Hall's EOP, where they were enrolled in intensive academic courses and formed long-lasting bonds over a 6-week period before they began their freshman year. Not only did the Pell Grant and Educational Opportunity Program provide financial assistance for Fatimah, but she was also afforded academic support: tutoring, structured study, academic advisement, summer courses, community service opportunities, internships, and counseling services throughout her college experience.

The program leveled the playing field, so Fatimah was not financially, academically, or socially isolated. The benefits of the Pell Grant have not only served Fatimah, but also two of her siblings, one of whom is a graduate from Rowan University, and the other a rising senior at Rutgers University. To date, more than 80 million students have received a Pell Grant to go to college since the program's creation. Currently, nearly 7 million students are going to college with Pell Grants, or about 40 percent of undergraduate students.

In New Jersey's 10th district, 27,085 students receive nearly \$121 million to pursue their higher education goals at our local colleges. Rutgers University, with one of its campuses located in Newark within my district, has more than 18,000 Pell recipients, providing over \$91 million in aid each year to students. Roughly 60 percent of Rutgers—Newark students receive Pell Grants, which is instrumental in their pursuit of higher education.

During this month as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Pell Grant program, I encourage the United States to celebrate “National Pell Grant Day,” recognizing the current students and successful graduates who have benefited from the program by telling their student success stories and encouraging the same access for future students.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to Congress continuing the bipartisan support for low-income student access to college through the Pell Grant for another 50 years. I am proud to join many of my colleagues on the bipartisan resolution declaring June 23, 2022, National Pell Grant Day this year, and in many years in the future.

RECOGNIZING JEROME “BIG DUCK” SMITH, CIVIL RIGHTS PIONEER AND FREEDOM RIDER

HON. TROY A. CARTER

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Mr. CARTER of Louisiana. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jerome “Big Duck” Smith, a New Orleans Native Civil Rights Pioneer and Icon of the Freedom Riders.

Jerome “Big Duck” Smith, a life-long resident of New Orleans, Louisiana, is considered a stalwart of the Civil Rights Movement locally and nationally.

It was 72 years ago that Jerome Smith, then 10 years old, removed the screen that acted as a barrier between white and black passengers on a New Orleans streetcar. “The streetcar became very hostile,” Smith recalls. The event took place 5 years before Rosa Parks energized the civil rights movement on December 1, 1955, when she refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger in Montgomery, Alabama.

Smith says that as he sat in the white section of the streetcar in Louisiana, an older black woman from the rear of the car descended on him, hitting him so hard that “It felt like there was a bell ringing in my head.” The woman loudly said she would teach the boy a lesson, telling him, “You should never do that, disrespect white people. You have no business trying to sit with them.”

She forced Smith off the streetcar, and around the back of an auto store. But once they were behind the building, the woman's tone changed. “Never, ever stop,” the woman told Smith as she began to cry. “I'm proud of you,” she said. “Don't you ever quit.”

Smith's involvement in the Civil Rights Movement dates back to the late 1950s when he joined the New Orleans chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (“CORE”) as a 19-year-old student at Southern University of New Orleans. From boycotting stores that refused to hire or serve Blacks to sit-ins along Canal Street, CORE's substantial contributions were integral to the Civil Rights Movement from 1960 onward. Speaking of CORE, the late Rudy Lombard stated, “They had ‘a certain confidence,’ . . . because they came out of a culture that was so rich. They knew that everything that was unique about the city could be traced to the Black presence.”

Thereafter, Smith challenged Federal desegregation laws across the South as a member of the Freedom Riders. Throughout his travels, Smith participated in numerous protests that resulted in battle wounds. In fact, Smith had been beaten at least 12 times by mobs or police during the struggle. On May 24, 1963, Smith met with Attorney General Robert Kennedy and a host of celebrities and civil rights leaders in New York City to discuss the state of civil rights in the United States. During this meeting, it is said Smith emotionally told the United States' Attorney General, “I've seen you guys [from the Justice Department] stand around and take notes while we're being beaten.” Despite grave injustice and adversity of the times, Smith made a profound impact on civil rights history.

Beyond the Civil Rights Movement, Smith continued to impact our city, particularly in the Tremé Community in New Orleans, Louisiana.